

R-FOR-100

November 3, 1960.

Monique Guitton,
19 Rue Marbeau,
Paris 16,
FRANCE

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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2003 2005

My dear Monique:

It is with great sadness that I write to you about the tragic and untimely death of Karl. I know that I cannot convey to you the sorrow of this whole office over this incident. He is greatly mourned by his friends and associates here. I can only hope in this letter to explain what work Karl was doing at the time and the circumstances of his death, and to tell you that he can never be replaced either in our affection for him or in his work.

As you know, the University of Rangoon has a vacation for the month of October. During that time, Karl had gone to the Shan State, to work on a tax survey of that area, a survey which was to be the basis for a development program in the State. The Asia Foundation had provided a grant to the Shan State for this work and Karl was carrying out his survey in the villages with the aid of several assistants. Usually police escort accompanied them on trips to the villages.

On October 29 Karl told the Shan State officials that because he would not be leaving Taunggyi vicinity again, he would not need any further police escorts. He had booked a reservation on the plane to Rangoon to return Monday, October 31st. On Sunday, October 30, it seems he changed his mind and went with the driver to the house of one of the Burmese assistants and asked him to join them for another trip. At 10:00 a.m. they went by Land Rover car to Hopong and stopped to visit the 'Five Day Bazaar' there. Perhaps you recall that the custom in Shan States is to hold a bazaar every five days, and many people come down to the bazaar from the hills, many strangers come into town, and with them often come robbers or dacoits. After walking through the bazaar where they made a few simple purchases, they drove the car down the road South from Hopong. You may remember that road, for when you and Karl first came to the Shan State with us, we visited the old pagoda in the jungle off that road. Their destination was a government experimental farm further down the road.

Some miles South of that Pagoda, while driving along slowly, Karl took pictures of tribespeople in the fields. Then near Milestone 29 the car was stopped by four bandits with guns and swords who demanded their money and wristwatches. The driver and assistant immediately gave

then what money they had and their watches and fountain pens and the assistant translated into English their demand to Karl. Karl was not upset by this, and as he was sitting on the left side of the front seat by the door, tried to open the door and step out. The robber slammed the door shut and shot Karl at pointblank range. The time was 1:00 p.m. From the medical evidence it is quite clear that Karl died instantly. The robbers then ordered the two other men to run away, and then the robbers ransacked the car taking cameras, binoculars etc. from it. The driver and assistant ran for help and returned sometime later with five policemen. Karl's body was taken to the Civil Hospital in Taunggyi.

I describe these details because I think you should know all the circumstances. They show that Karl died bravely and painlessly.

At 10:30 Sunday evening Mr. Kenneth Ho, secretary of the Shan State Ministry in Rangoon, telephoned me at home to tell us the terrible news. He had just received the first cable from Taunggyi and called us immediately. Kipp and I went quickly to the office and sent out the necessary cables to you, sending one to Madagascar and a second to Paris, to his parents, to Jim Dalton in Tokyo, and to San Francisco. The next day, Monday, the Minister of Shan State chartered a special airplane to take me and some officials to Taunggyi to bring back Karl's body and possessions and to allow me to interview the eyewitnesses and Shan officials and police concerned. The whole of the Shan State Government met us in Taunggyi and they were so shocked and saddened that they were literally almost speechless at the airport. Many were his friends and working associates. We returned by the plane to Rangoon at 5:30 that evening and Karl's body was taken to the Rangoon Mortuary.

Karl's parents in Vienna have cabled us that they wished his body sent back to Vienna. I have arranged that the Foundation will airship his remains and will cable you the flight number and date as soon as it is certain. The Foundation will pay the costs of shipping to Vienna and Karl's estate should bear the costs of funeral. Our San Francisco office will be writing you soon about financial and other details.

We have made an inventory of Karl's possessions in the house and removed all valuables to the office and locked them up for safekeeping. We have also changed the locks on the house and placed a guard there. We plan to ship all his belongings to Vienna, if you agree, but we will look through Karl's personal papers and return to you any of your letters as well as any other personal papers which concern you. When the shipment arrives in Vienna you could go there and take the things which are yours or should be yours.

You have probably received Jim Dalton's cable of condolence from Tokyo. You can be assured that he and Margaret, his wife, were stunned and grief-stricken by this news. They had just left Rangoon for two weeks in Tokyo the day I cabled them the news of tragedy.

Today I met the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and he asked me to send to you his condolences and sincere best wishes. I am also enclosing a copy of a personal letter from the Head of Shan State to Jim Dalton about this. Our office has been flooded with calls all day from both Burmese and foreigners, such as the West German Minister, who asked whether they could do anything to help, and expressing their shock and sorrow.

We cannot tell you how very much my and my wife's sympathy and grief go out to you. We were very good friends of Karl and miss him sorely. We will do everything we can to ease this burden for you. Please let us know how we can be of help to you.

With kindest regards,

David Steinberg
Assistant Representative.

Enclosed: letter -- Head of Shan State.

THE ASIA FOUNDATION

P. O. Box 1419
Rangoon, Burma

MEMORANDUM

TO : The President, The Asia Foundation

ATTENTION :

SUBJECT : The Death of Dr. Karl L. Herczeg

REFERENCE :

NOV 14 AM 9:31

R- 709

NOV 14 AM 9:31

Date

NOV 14 AM 9:31

November 3, 1960

NOV 14 AM 9:31

1. Purpose of Dr. Herczeg's visit to the Shan State:

On September 29, 1960 The Asia Foundation received a formal request (copy attached) from the Burma Foreign Office requesting the part-time services of Dr. Herczeg to make an immediate tax survey of the Shan State and "to prepare the statistical basis and groundwork for the formulation of a development policy". The letter of agreement between the Shan State Government and The Asia Foundation was signed on October 6th, and this was forwarded to San Francisco on October 7th (R-650).

Since the University of Rangoon was on vacation during the month of October, Dr. Herczeg, with the approval of this office, planned to use this time in starting the tax survey. Dr. Herczeg therefore flew to Taunggyi on October 11th, and there met his 2 assistants. He proceeded immediately to engage in the survey, by visiting villages and towns in the Southern Shan State and checking on taxation collection procedures in several of the previously semi-autonomous tax areas. It should be remembered that the tax survey was the start of a broader plan for the economic development of the State. Thus Dr. Herczeg had to explore the whole range of the Shan economy. At each step the Shan State Government was kept fully informed of the details of his work, providing escort whenever necessary.

The Assistant Representative saw Dr. Herczeg in Taunggyi on October 20th and 21st, and discussed the project with him at that time. He was enthusiastic about its possible success.

Dr. Herczeg had planned to return to Rangoon on October 31st, and start teaching at the University of Rangoon. He had booked his reservation on the plane for that date. He was killed less than twenty-four hours before his proposed departure from the Shan State.

2. Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr. Herczeg:

Attached is a copy (English translation) of the official report of U Myat Tha Htoo, Assistant Economics Officer employed by the Shan State Government under this grant from the Foundation, and who was with Dr. Herczeg at the time of his death. This report has been filed with the Shan State Ministry and with the police. It needs clarification on several points.

Wanyin farm is the site of a large-scale agricultural project supported by the Shan State Government. In the same area is a community development and resettlement

project undertaken independently by the Pa-O tribe (or Taungthu - a tribal group distinct from the Shans and vaguely related to the Karens). The Asia Foundation has been approached for assistance on both projects: agricultural equipment for the Waryin farm, and school equipment for the Pa-O community development. It is clear that a visit to the farm and the surrounding areas was both in line with the project which Dr. Herczeg was engaged in, and also related to the long-term interests of the Foundation in the Shan State. It is apparent that Dr. Herczeg planned to return to the farm and visit it, after driving some way along the road to the South (see attached report - top of page two). Therefore, one must assume that Dr. Herczeg was on duty at the time of his death.

Why Dr. Herczeg said he had no money and did not turn over to the dacoits the K. 946/20 which was later found in his pocket (and which the dacoits missed - it was found in his pocket at Taunggyi hospital), and why he tried to open the car door is not known. It would seem that the dacoit became frightened or angry at Dr. Herczeg's sudden move to open the door, and shot him out of fear.

From the dress of the dacoits, and the halting way that they spoke Burmese, U Myat Tha Htoo feels that they were probably Pa-O or possibly Shan. In any case, he says they definitely were not Burmese.

The chief police officer of the area has personally engaged in the search for the dacoits. U Hla Pe, the leader of the Pa-O tribes, has also promised full assistance in capturing them. He was a good friend of Dr. Herczeg, and is also well known to the Foundation. This office is convinced that the Shan Government is doing everything in its power to apprehend the robbers and murderer.

3. Cooperation of the Shan State Government:

At 10:30 p.m. Sunday evening October 30th, Kenneth Ho, Secretary of the Shan State Ministry, telephoned me at my home and informed me of the news. An immediate attempt was made to send cables to San Francisco, Tokyo (Mr. Dalton), Miss Guitton, and Dr. & Mrs. Herczeg. Unfortunately the cable office was closed, and the cables were sent at 6:00 a.m. October 31st.

At noon on that same day, the Minister of the Shan State, Sao Hkun Hkio, chartered a special UBA flight so that I could proceed to Heho (the airport for Taunggyi) and bring back the body and talk with government officials. The plane was met at the airport by virtually the whole of the Shan Government at Taunggyi, who were almost speechless with sadness. Sao Hkun Hkio has sent a personal letter of condolence to the Foundation. Attached are copies of all correspondence with the Shan State Government, and their internal cables relating to the affair.

According to the letter of agreement (last paragraph, page one), "The Shan Government will contribute all security protection for the members of the Survey." The Shan Government has lived up to this provision as well as they have been able, supplying escort when it knew that Dr. Herczeg was going to dangerous areas. However, the area around Taunggyi has not been considered hazardous for over two years, and foreigners, including Foundation staff, travel throughout that area at will without escort. Therefore it was natural for Dr. Herczeg to feel that if he wanted to take a last minute trip to continue his survey to an area void of

rebels, he did not need to notify the Shan State Government and get escort. Yet at the same time the Shan Government, which the report of Nyat Tha Htoo and the internal Shan State cables confirms, could not reasonably be expected to supply escort for a trip of which they had no knowledge.

It is clear that this tragedy was an isolated incident of robbery, and had no relation whatsoever to the Shan rebellion or insurgency which is still active, especially in the Northern Shan State. The nature of the robbery and murder support this conclusion. In the tribal areas of Upper Burma, where bazaars are held every five days, dacoits often ambush vehicles returning from the bazaar, as the occupants usually carry considerable cash from selling their wares. (It should be remembered that in these small towns there are no banking facilities, and all funds must be in cash). Unfortunately, Sunday was Bazaar Day in Hopong.

The Shan Government has indicated that it feels that this event was an example of banditry, not insurgency. We have agreed with this interpretation, and have stressed, in our correspondence with them, and with the Union Government, that this was an isolated incident of aggression.

4. Shipment of Dr. Herczeg's Remains to Vienna:

This office requested authority from Mr. Dalton in Tokyo to pay for and arrange airshipment of the body to Vienna, if the parents desired it. They have since indicated that this is their wish, and the authority for the shipment has been received. Attached are copies of all cables in this regard.

On notification of Dr. Herczeg's death, a cable was sent to The Asia Foundation office in Karachi requesting them to inform the Austrian Legation there about the incident. The Austrian Legation in Karachi has jurisdiction over Burma. We have since cabled them requesting import regulation on shipping the body to Vienna. As yet these have not been received. Copies of all these cables are attached.

We are tentatively planning to ship the body to Vienna via Pan American on November 7th, if local regulations can be met at that time, and if we have received the necessary information from the Austrian Legation, Karachi.*

Five copies of the death certificate are attached.**

5. Dr. Herczeg's Personal Effects:

Upon hearing the tragic news, an inventory was immediately made of all Dr. Herczeg's belongings in Rangoon, and they were locked up to prevent looting. The Shan Government authorities did the same thing with his effects in Taunggyi, and these were brought down to Rangoon with his body.

We propose, after sorting out the books which he had on loan from the University of Rangoon, and other sources, that the remainder of his effects be packed and

* We have just received information from the Austrian Legation (copies attached).

** Four originals and one thermofaxed. We will forward another original within a day or two.

shipped to Vienna. This situation is somewhat complicated because there are in his house certain possessions of Miss Monique Guitton, his fiancée. We are asking her permission to ship everything to Vienna, after which it can be sorted out by the heirs. We will hold shipment of his goods until we have received guidance from you, and further information from Dr. Herczeg's parents and Miss Guitton.

In addition, Dr. Herczeg had prepared a manuscript book on the history of the economic integration of Europe. This was based on his series of lectures at the University of Rangoon. He had given this to my wife for editing of English. Dr. Aye Hlaing, head of the Department of Economics, has indicated interest in having this published in Burma. We do not know what plans Dr. Herczeg may have had to publish this work, but permission would have to be given by the estate before any action could be taken locally.

6. Newspaper Coverage:

We are enclosing clippings from The Nation and The Guardian on the death of Dr. Herczeg. Both stories are badly garbled, partly because the facts were not fully known when the initial stories were printed, and partly because of faulty journalism. We have not sent them to Dr. Herczeg's parents and Miss Guitton, because of their inaccuracy.

We are enclosing our correspondence with Miss Guitton and Dr. and Mrs. Herczeg. Please note, in writing to them, that we have slightly abridged the account of the death (for example, not mentioning that Karl refused to give up the money) for compassionate reasons.

In the near future we will be writing you about the effect of Dr. Herczeg's death on this project, and on the International Relations Program. It will take some time before this has been completely sorted out.

We would appreciate guidance on the following points:

- A. Who is the beneficiary of Dr. Herczeg's insurance?
- B. We assume that Dr. Herczeg is covered by Workman's compensation death benefits. Is this correct?
- C. Dr. Herczeg's assistant and the driver lost both cash and some personal possessions such as watches and fountain pens, as well as some clothes. Although the Foundation does not have personal coverage for these men, could Headquarters authorize payment to them to cover their losses? The amount to the Foundation would be small, and the good will created would be considerable.

In this report we have stressed the practical details surrounding this tragedy. Emotionally, however, the whole of this office, both the foreign and domestic staff, have been greatly saddened and distressed by this event. The Burmese and foreign communities of Rangoon have flooded this office with requests to be of assistance.